

PhD RESEARCH PLAN

NAME: Keao NeSmith

1. Thesis title:

The teaching and learning of Hawaiian language and culture in public high schools and tertiary level schools in Hawai'i: Issues relating to linguistic and cultural continuity and discontinuity.

2. Overall Aim:

To examine aspects of the teaching and learning of Hawaiian language in public secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Hawai'i with particular emphasis on content and methodology and on linguistic and cultural continuity and discontinuity.

3. Rationale:

Recognizing that language plays an important role in the construction of identity, aboriginal peoples in many countries throughout the world are attempting to promote their languages in a context where other languages have become dominant. This is particularly difficult where the dominant languages are widely used both nationally and internationally and where there has been discontinuity in intergenerational transmission of the languages of the aboriginal peoples. In such contexts, tutored language learning in institutional contexts often plays a central role. However, many (often the majority) of the teachers of the languages of the aboriginal peoples, or those who teach through the medium of these languages, are not themselves native speakers of these languages. Furthermore, there are implications for language continuity in using languages in academic contexts that have not evolved naturally to accommodate this type of use. This has inevitably led to problems relating to (a) the levels of overall proficiency reached, (b) the fossilization of errors, and (c) types of language change that can result in a breakdown of communication between native speakers and those who have learned the language in institutional contexts. In this situation, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed, including issues relating to the nature of the relationship between the language spoken by native speakers and the language spoken by fluent non-native speakers and their children. It may be, for example, that the language spoken by native speakers differs from that of fluent non-native speakers to such an extent that these should now be classified as two different (but related) languages. The problem of classification is not, however, a straightforward one, one complicating factor being the fact that some contemporary speakers who have learned largely in institutional contexts have also been influenced by native speakers. Whatever approach to classification is adopted, an additional issue is that of identity. Both languages acquired through inter-generational transmission and languages learned in tutored language learning contexts can be important markers of identity. Issues relating to the relationship between language and aboriginal identities are particularly complex ones in contexts where there have been discontinuities in language transmission. It is important, therefore, to clarify the nature of the issues involved so that there is a solid basis for informed discussion and debate. In order to provide a firm basis for such debate, it is important to determine what is being taught in tutored language learning contexts, how it is being taught

and what impact this teaching is having not only on the learners, but on the language itself. It is not, however, possible to cover all of these issues adequately in the context of PhD research. My aim here is therefore to contribute to the debate by focusing in one language (Hawaiian) in one context (the teaching and learning of Hawaiian in public secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Hawai‘i) at the same time providing background information about the Hawaiian language context more generally. My focus is not only on what is taught and how it is taught but also on the reasons for teaching and learning and the domains in which the language learned are used.

4. Research Questions and Research Methods

4.1 Research questions

Question 1:

What is the general situation regarding the Hawaiian language and culture in Hawai‘i currently and what are the main historical factors that have led to the current situation?

(Literature review)

Question 2:

In what contexts are people currently learning Hawaiian in Hawai‘i (with particular emphasis on public secondary schools and the tertiary education context)?

Question 3:

What is actually taught in courses in Hawaiian language and culture in public secondary schools and the tertiary educational contexts in Hawai‘i and to what extent can the content of these courses be said to differ from the language and culture of native speakers?

Question 4:

How successfully (according to criteria derived from a review of literature on the teaching and learning of languages) is Hawaiian language and culture taught and learned in a sample of public secondary schools and the tertiary education classes?

Question 5 (a – h):

In public secondary schools and the tertiary educational contexts and with reference to a sample of teachers and learners:

- a) What are the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of teachers and learners?
- b) What are the main reasons for teaching and learning the language and culture?
- c) What are the main domains in which the language and culture are taught and learned and put to use?
- d) How important do teachers and learners consider it to be to establish and maintain contact with native speakers of the language?
- e) How successful do teachers and learners consider the teaching and learning to be in public secondary schools and tertiary education sector?
- f) What are the main factors that contribute to the motivation of teachers and learners?
- g) What levels of proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking do teachers and learners of Hawaiian aim to achieve, believe they have achieved and *actually achieve*¹?
- h) What types of error characterize the language of teachers of Hawaiian language classes at public secondary and tertiary level?

4.2 Research methods**Critical review of selected literature on:**

- the general situation regarding the Hawaiian language and culture in Hawai‘i currently and what are the main historical factors that have led to the current situation (relates to *Question 1* above);
- the factors that contribute to successful teaching and learning of additional languages in tutored language learning contexts;
- language variety and language change.

Data collection and analysis:

- collection and summary of courses and programs on Hawaiian language and culture available at all educational levels in Hawai‘i;
- collection and analysis of a sample of curricula, course prescriptions, textbooks and teaching materials used in public secondary and tertiary educational institutions (analyzed in relation to linguistic and cultural content);
- recording and transcription of a sample of lessons taught in public secondary schools and tertiary institutions (analyzed in terms of criteria derived from the critical review of literature on successful teaching and learning of additional languages in tutored language learning contexts, including error analysis);
- collection and analysis of data relating to the backgrounds and opinions of a sample of teachers and students in public secondary schools and tertiary education contexts (includes design and testing of questionnaire-based surveys and interview schedules);

¹ Note that sections in italics are optional and subject to time availability

- *collection of data on the proficiency of a sample of students who have completed a high school diploma or major in Hawaiian language at the Associates or Bachelors degree level (includes design, distribution and analysis of C-tests).*

Research instruments:

- Questionnaire for a sample of teachers of Hawaiian language and culture at public secondary schools and tertiary level institutions
- Questionnaire for a sample of students of Hawaiian language and culture at public secondary schools and tertiary level institutions
- Semi-structured interview schedule (for a sample of teachers)
- Semi-structured interview schedule (for a sample of students)
- *C-tests in Hawaiian (optional addition)*

Research Ethics Comment:

Human Research Ethics Committee approval has been gained in relation to the following (see attached):

- Questionnaires;
- Semi-structured interviews;
- Collection and analysis of lesson materials

Proposed Chapter Headings

Chapter 1:

Introduction to the research: Rationale, research questions, research methods

Chapter 2:

Critical review of literature on the general situation regarding the Hawaiian language and culture currently and the main historical factors that have led to the current situation

Chapter 3:

Critical review of selected literature on language change and language variety (with particular reference to contexts in which there is discontinuity in linguistic transmission) and the factors that contribute to successful teaching and learning of additional languages in tutored language learning contexts

Chapter 4:

A questionnaire-based and interview-based survey of a sample of teachers of Hawaiian in public secondary schools and tertiary level institutions

Chapter 5:

A questionnaire-based and interview-based survey of a sample of students of Hawaiian in public secondary schools and tertiary level institutions

Chapter 6:

Criterion-based analysis of a sample of curricula, course prescriptions and teaching resources used in the teaching of Hawaiian language and culture in public secondary schools and tertiary level institutions

Chapter 7:

Criterion-referenced analysis of a sample of Hawaiian language lessons taught in public secondary schools and tertiary level institutions

Chapter 8 (optional additional chapter):

C-testing and the proficiency achievements of a sample of students who have majored in Hawaiian language at Bachelor degree level

Chapter 9: Conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future research

Task	Target completion date	Comment
Design questionnaire for teachers	March 2008	Completed
Design questionnaire for students	March 2008	Completed
Design semi-structured interview prompts for teachers and students	Mid-April 2008	Completed
Collect, read and review literature for literature review	December 2009	Runs throughout the duration of the research project but largely completed by the date indicated
Determine criteria for lesson analysis	May 2008	Completed
Design full research proposal	May 2008	
Complete Ethics Committee application (1)	June 2008	
Decide on numbers of contacts for questionnaire-based survey and interviews and determine how these will be conducted	June 2008	
Submit full research proposal for transfer from provisional to full enrolment	July 2008	
Trail questionnaires	July 2008	
Decide on how to collect teaching data	August 2008	
Distribute teacher questionnaires	September 2008	
Distribute student questionnaires	October 2008	
Collect lesson data	November 2008	
Collect data relating to course outlines, textbooks etc.	December 2008	

Record and analyze teacher questionnaire data	February 2009	
Record and analyze student questionnaire data	April 2009	
Conduct interviews with teachers	May 2009	
Conduct interviews with students	June 2009	
Write draft of Chapter 4	August 2009	
Write draft of Chapter 5	October 2009	
Transcribe lessons	November 2009	
Analyze lessons	March 2010	
Write draft of Chapter 7	May 2010	
Write draft of Chapter 6	July 2010	
Complete draft of Chapter 2	September 2010	Ongoing from July 2008
Complete draft of Chapter 3	December 2010	Ongoing from July 2008
Write draft of Chapter 1	February 2011	
<i>Collect and read literature on C-testing²</i>	April 2011	Optional (depends on progress in other areas)
<i>Design C-tests</i>	May 2011	Optional (depends on progress in other areas)
<i>Application to Ethics committee (2)</i>	June 2011	Optional (depends on progress in other areas)
<i>Do C-testing</i>	August 2011	Optional (depends on progress in other areas)
<i>Analyze C-test data</i>	September 2011	Optional (depends on progress in other areas)
Write draft of Chapter 8	October 2011	Optional (depends on progress in other areas)
Write draft of Chapter 9	November 2011	
Revise chapter drafts	December 2011	
Prepare thesis for submission	February 2012	

² Note that sections in italics are optional and subject to time availability

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